

Exford C. of E. First School

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorized or unauthorized.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorized absence

- An absence is classified as authorized when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorized. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorized. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorized absence.

2.2 Unauthorized absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorized when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorized if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavor to contact a parent or guardian.

- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note, or a telephone call may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 We recognize that it is often expensive or inconvenient to take family holidays during school breaks and that some parents may ask for term-time leave for their children. It is important that parents consider carefully the implications of taking their child out of school during term-times.
- 4.2 There is no entitlement to leave for a holiday, but Head teachers may grant leave in exceptional circumstances. Head teachers may authorize, in advance, leave of up to 10 days only if:
- It will not result in the child's cumulative attendance falling below 92%, which is the national expectation. This figure represents one week's absence out of a twelve-week term.
 - It is not during or leading up to SATs testing periods.
 - It is not within the first two weeks of a school term or at any other key times.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorized absences

- 6.1 Parents will be informed if their child's attendance falls below 92%. Persistent attendance levels of below 92% are a concern and will be investigated.
- If attendance levels reach 85% or below, a formal letter of concern will be sent to the parents. The pupil will be placed on **Stage 1 of the West Somerset Register of Attendance Concern**. This will be the start of an official monitoring and support system and means that regular half-termly analysis is triggered and regular correspondence is undertaken.
- A congratulations letter will be sent if there is improvement.

If attendance worsens the pupil will move on to **Stage 2 of the West Somerset Register of Attendance Concern** after half a term and parents kept informed.

If there is no improvement after a term the pupil will be placed on **Stage 3 of the West Somerset Register of Attendance Concern**. The pupil will be referred to the Educational Social Worker. A letter will be sent to the parents informing them of this. The EWO will then write and establish contact with the family.

- 6.2** The governors, supported by the LEA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1** All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special prizes for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1** The school sets attendance targets each year. The Head teacher and governors agree these. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LEA School Development Advisor as well at the Annual Review Meeting. The targets are based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2** The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3** The rates of attendance will be reported in the school prospectus, and in the annual governors' report.
- 9.4** Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Head teacher, who will contact the parents or guardian.
- 9.5** This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed:

Date: